

Namaste sabai lai. Good evening, Ladies and gentlemen.

I am delighted to be here tonight as you celebrate the start of a new chapter in your life as MBA graduates.

It's an honor to be joined by Mr. Prithivi Bahadur Pande and Mr. Min Bahadur Gurung. As you know, these are people who have inspired many young Nepalese to think bigger and to set their sights higher. I want to thank ACE Institute of Management for bringing me on the same platform as these accomplished gentlemen.

I love my job. Well, my career really.

- I am a senior executive – but I don't take home an executive's pay.
- I work long hours and weekends – but not everyday or weekend.
- I have to do a lot of 'shit work,' and often things I don't like.
- I don't always agree with what I must do in my job.

So why do I love my job? Fair question.

It is because the ultimate objective of my work and my organization is something I truly believe in – you could say it is my passion. In fact, I have dedicated my life to its pursuit.

I am, no doubt, incredibly blessed.

My parents worked very hard – at jobs they did not love or even like – so that I had opportunities they did not. I am sure that is the same for many of you. I also worked hard and, as a result, some opportunities have come my way.

Yet, somewhere along the path, I discovered that a nice paycheck, a big house, or a nice car – was not the ‘opportunity’ I wanted.

The opportunity I wanted, and was lucky enough to obtain – was to pursue my passion and get paid to do so.

If I had one wish for each of you tonight – just one wish or recommendation or bit of advice - It is to try to find your passion, your inspiration, and use your great skill, individual talents, your **opportunities** in its pursuit.

I am a modest public servant of my country. However, my passion is to help the poorest people in the poorest places of the world to rise out of their poverty. My government pays me to do this work. And when I see evidence that we have been successful - that villagers no longer suffer from malaria, or mothers don’t die in childbirth, or farmers finally earn enough to feed their families – the modest paycheck, the long hours, the ‘shit work’ is all forgotten.

I have been in Nepal for about six months now, and I see that Nepal has great potential, but also faces many, many challenges. Travelling around this beautiful country and meeting people from different walks of life, I see and hear a lot about the difficulties that people face. But, I also see the inspiration and entrepreneurial spirit in the Nepali youth, in people like you, – the kind of talent needed for this country to overcome its many challenges. And it is clear to me, that if this abundant potential is positively channeled, Nepal can overcome its challenges.

As a representative of the U.S. Agency for International Development, I can confidently reaffirm USAID’s tremendous faith in the youth of Nepal.

We support programs that improve the health, social, and economic well-being of young Nepalese. And we strive to involve youth as key actors in many of our programs. It is one of our highest priorities.

For example, Our *Education for Income Generation* program provides basic literacy training, life

skills and vocational education, and instruction in modern agriculture, to young people. These efforts are increasing access to education and training for employment for many thousands of youth. It is reaping results that reinforce my belief in Nepal's youth.

With this little nudge and support from us, these young beneficiaries of our *Education for Income Generation*

program - are embracing new opportunities, setting up businesses, and performing extraordinarily well in their jobs. They are contributing to their communities, feeding their families and sending their sons and daughters to school.

You all have been much more fortunate. You have benefited from the wisdom of some of the best teachers. You have mastered the sophisticated skills that enable you to manipulate the world around you. You all are the next generation of Nepalese leaders. And you will, no doubt, have great opportunities.

I hope you use those opportunities to find and pursue your passion. And that your passion is **greater than yourself**

. You can become brilliant examples not only for your friends and colleagues, but in this increasingly connected world, for young people around the globe.

Increasingly, corporate success requires more than just a return for the shareholder. Corporate success requires a commitment to your employees, the communities in which you work, and the world that ultimately buys your products or services. I'm sure my fellow guests of honor, Mr. Pande and Mr. Gurung, who know the corporate world far better than I, will agree with me on this.

Your great skills will be needed to find the money to build road networks across Nepal or to pay doctors to work in a rural health posts. Your talents will be needed to finally unleash Nepal's hydropower potential. You will undoubtedly help establish businesses that provide jobs for many others. Your talents may be needed to convince two communities to work together on a micro-hydro project that neither village could afford alone. In sum, your country desperately needs your talents.

In closing,

- **I urge** you to **pursue your passion**.
- **I hope** your passion is **greater than yourself**.
- And **I pray** you respond to the call of your great country to help it overcome its challenges.

Congratulations on your impressive accomplishments.

Jed Meline
USAID Deputy Mission Director